

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

P J Noyes Co Inc

New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership

New Hampshire MEP helps P. J. Noyes keep TABS on their processes

Client Profile:

P. J. Noyes Company, Inc. has been manufacturing and packaging over-the-counter pharmaceuticals and personal care products for over a century. The company produces tablets and liquids as well as ointments, creams and lotions. Currently, P. J. Noyes employs 95 people at its facility in Lancaster, New Hampshire.

Situation:

P. J. Noyes was a long-time employer and integral part of the rural area of New Hampshire. As other businesses were closing their doors, the company became a larger factor in the local economy and decided to take steps to become more competitive by improving operations. New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership's (NH MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, project manager, Jane T. Ely, invited P.J. Noyes Chief Operating Officer, Dennis Wogaman, to attend public events and workshops put on by her organization. Wogaman was impressed with what he saw and invited NH MEP to bring the Lean principles to his plant.

Solution:

NH MEP conducted training in Basic Lean Training, a workshop which introduces Lean concepts and tools and shows how these concepts are applied through an interactive simulation. After the basic training, employee teams were trained on Value Stream Mapping (VSM). They then mapped various processes to identify wastes and formulated plans to reduce those wastes through subsequent Kaizen activities. NH MEP also provided Train the Trainer instruction for a core group of supervisors so that they could continue the improvement process in the P. J. Noyes facility themselves. In tablet manufacturing, dry raw materials are granulated and mixed and then pressed into tablets. The tablets are then stored as inventory for subsequent packaging into bottles or tubes. During the VSM, the group did spaghetti diagrams of all the walking done during the process. The work in tablet manufacturing needs to be done on two levels as the process is gravity fed. Employees were constantly going up and down the stairs to determine status of materials. Through the VSM exercise, they identified wasted travel and decided to move processes, people, and materials closer together. They also realized there was wasted effort in the paperwork and developed measures to streamline it. Visual signals were incorporated so that the 'floor can talk' to the employees. On each level, a system of lights are turned on or off giving advance notice of when materials need to be moved. This simple system reduced waiting time and stair climbing. As a result of NH MEP's assistance, the average number of tablets produced per labor hour increased from 10,000 to 12,500. This productivity increase has allowed the company to meet their client demand. As a result of Lean implementation, operators work in teams with clearly defined responsibilities which has streamlined their jobs and made their tasks easier. In the liquid packaging department, the company has set up staging areas for point of use storage, by reorganizing and using signage to identify where things belong when not in use. "Overall it is the recognition of the importance of the process not just the claim of improving operations

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and efficiencies that is important," said Tracey Morrill, P.J. Noyes Tablet Production Manager.

Results:

- * Increased productivity by 25 percent.
- * Improved employee morale.

Testimonial:

"We now recognize that there is vast opportunity for improvement. Converts (to Lean) realize that this isn't the best they can do. You need to sit down and look at the areas and think about what else you can do. Then, as managers are able to show their teams successful results, they get the buy in, which is key to sustaining the improvements."

Dennis Wogaman, COO